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ETYMOLOGY.

THE WORD "PARDON" AND ITS SYNONYMES IN WELSH, GREEK, AND LATIN.

PARDON one from the clouds of Cader Idris, Mr. Editor, for presuming to obtrude on your pages the result of some wanderings in the regions of etymology, by way of variety, or as a contrast to the discoveries you make in the brilliant atmosphere of London. And, the first word of my text being very necessary to be well understood among friends and foes, I will endeavour to trace its origin and derivation.

Pardon is to be found in most of the European languages, but not of very high antiquity in any. It began to appear in the Welsh upwards of 500 years back; and it has been deemed a legitimate word therein by some learned critics. Yet I have always rejected it as an exotic, in writing my native tongue; but I now begin to surmise that I have been over fastidious in so doing.

In Welsh the word is written *pardwn*, and thence, by inflection, the verb *pardynu*. PAR and TWN are two primitive words, which compounded form *pardwn*, the t, in *twn*, taking its soft sound, for want of an appropriate character in the Roman alphabet, represented by the letter *d*. PAR implies *that is upon, contiguous, or in continuity*; a state of readiness, or preparedness; a pair, match, or couple: "I mi âr bar y mae'r bedd,"—To me in preparation is the grave. D. G. 1340. TWN is a break, a fracture, a rising off; a scale, a splint; adj.—broken, severed, splintered: and its f. is *ton*, a breaker of the sea; *tonau*, breakers. Hence the literal meaning of *par* and *twn*, forming *pardwn*, is a break off of what is upon or joined; a separation.

The Greek noun *αφεσις*, and its verb *αφεμινειν*, and the Latin noun *VENIA*, with the verb *MITTO*, which imply *pardon*, and to remit, shall now be put to the same criterion; because the greater part, perhaps, of the primitives of those two languages are not only preserved also in the Welsh, but they are used in their simple forms, as words of obvious signification.

Etymologists refer the noun *αφεσις*, to the verb *αφεμινειν*, to remit, which enables us to identify it with a Welsh primitive. PI is the state of being in, or possessed; PIAINT, possession; PIAW, to own, to become possessed of. The negative *a*, prefixed to *piaaw*, would form *aphiaaw*, to sever from, to dispossess.

The Latin term *venia* comes next to be considered. But let it

be first observed, that the *v* is not a radical articulation, according to the principle of the Welsh alphabet, of 16 primary characters, but it is either the soft mutation of *b* or of *m**; and it is a character that has not even a place in the Greek alphabet. Therefore, in seeking for a primitive to *venia*, we must have recourse to one with a radical initial. Many words of common origin, in the Welsh and the Latin, begin with a *g* in the former, and *v* in the latter: as *gwr*, *vir*; *gwynt*, *ventus*; *gwyrth*, *virtus*; *gwir*, *verus*; and the like. A Welsh word, conformable to this principle, offers itself to notice, which is *GWAN*, a *going through*, a *severing*, a *dividing*, a *thrust*, a *stab*; and the verb is *gwanu*: “*Y neb à wanai, nid adweinid.*”—Whoever he should send away would not be recognised. *Aneurin*. The *g* loses its sound in certain cases in most languages; and in the Welsh it doth so regularly under various rules of construction.

The last to be noticed is the Latin verb *MITTO*, *to send*, *to dismiss*, *to throw off*; and also used in the sense of its derivative, *remitto*. Etymology refers this to the Greek verb $\mu\acute{\epsilon}\theta\tilde{\alpha}$, of like import; and which comes to our purpose. The common term in Welsh, for pardon, is *maddeuant*, from *maddeu*, and the regular verb is *MADDEUAW*, *to let go*, *to set at large*, *to loosen*, *to liberate*, *to dismiss*, *to quit*, *to pardon*. *Eneid-vaddeu*, that is, about to let the soul depart, one condemned to death; *maddeu y dyrra*, to dismiss the multitude; *maddeuynt eu rhwydau*, they left their nets; *maddenau vy mod hyved*, pardon my being so bold. It is remarkable, that there is scarcely a difference in sound between the Greek $\mu\acute{\epsilon}\theta\tilde{\alpha}$ and the Welsh *maddeuaw*; as may be seen by dividing it thus, *ma-ddeu-aw*, and pronouncing the middle syllable like the English pronoun *they*, with *ma* before and *o* after it—*ma-they-o*.

Thus it is demonstrated, that the Welsh language has preserved the roots of the words $\alpha\phi\epsilon\sigma\varsigma$, $\mu\acute{\epsilon}\theta\tilde{\alpha}$, *mitto*, and *pardon*.

The old Cymry must have been of a forgiving disposition, by their bestowing a word to ask pardon on most of their neighbours, except the English, whom they suffered out of spite to put up with their own awkward *forgiveness*, till they got their *pardon*, at second-hand, from the French.

Digona hyna.

GEIRION.

* See *CAMBRO-BRITON*, vol. i. p. 245, for an account of the Welsh radical letters, and also p. 404, where the principle of initial mutations in the Welsh language is fully explained.—ED.